

MARVEL 004

FALL OF X

CAMP
MARESCA
LOPEZ

MARVEL STUDIOS
THE MARVELS

NOW PLAYING IN THEATERS

CHILDREN OF THE WASTELAND



The City.



One more
step, and you'll
be scraping your
**upper west
side** off the
walls!

[fall_of]
[X]

FALL OF X

[fall_of]
[X]

CHILDREN OF THE VAULT

Become the Future

Raised in a closed vault where temporal-acceleration technology causes them to rapidly evolve, the **Children of the Vault** are super-powered beings who have long been on a collision course with the humans and mutants of Earth. As the Children evolve, each newly upgraded generation has sought to stake a claim as the planet’s superior species but have time and again been thwarted by the **X-Men**.

But recently, mutants have become scarce. The anti-mutant organization **Orchis** threatened to annihilate increasing numbers of humans for every mutant found on the planet, forcing **Charles Xavier** to psychically banish all mutants from Earth. Only a handful with training were able to resist his telepathic command, including **Cable** and **Bishop**.

Without mutants to stop them, the Children emerged from the vault and unleashed a **psychic virus** that bent people’s wills to the Children’s whim. Upon discovering this, Cable and Bishop tricked Orchis into launching an attack on the Children’s sentient **City**. In the chaos, Cable snuck into the City’s center to destroy its master A.I. -- only to be confronted by Serafina-191...

- 1 SERAFINA
[version 191]
- 2 CAPITÁN
[version 204]
- 3 FERRO
[version 51]
- 4 PRISA
[version 38]
- 5 LUZ
[version 67]
- 6 ÁTOMO
[version 82]
- 7 CABLE
- 8 BISHOP



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CHILDREN OF THE VAULT

04

“KILL THE FUTURE!”



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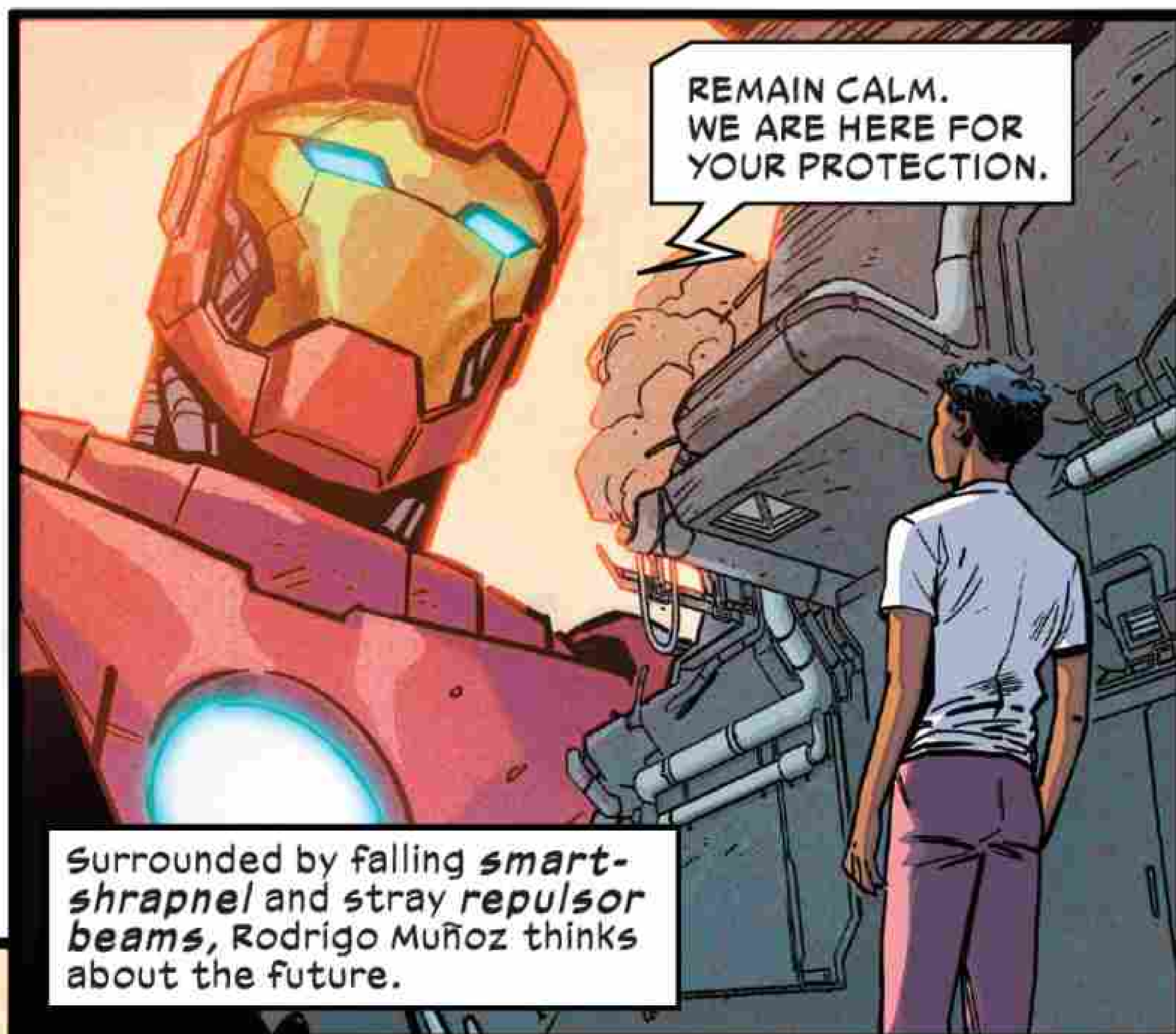
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REMAIN CALM.
WE ARE HERE FOR
YOUR PROTECTION.

Surrounded by falling *smart-shrapnel* and stray *repulsor beams*, Rodrigo Muñoz thinks about the future.



Tierra Desnuda
Tomorrow Town.
Chile.

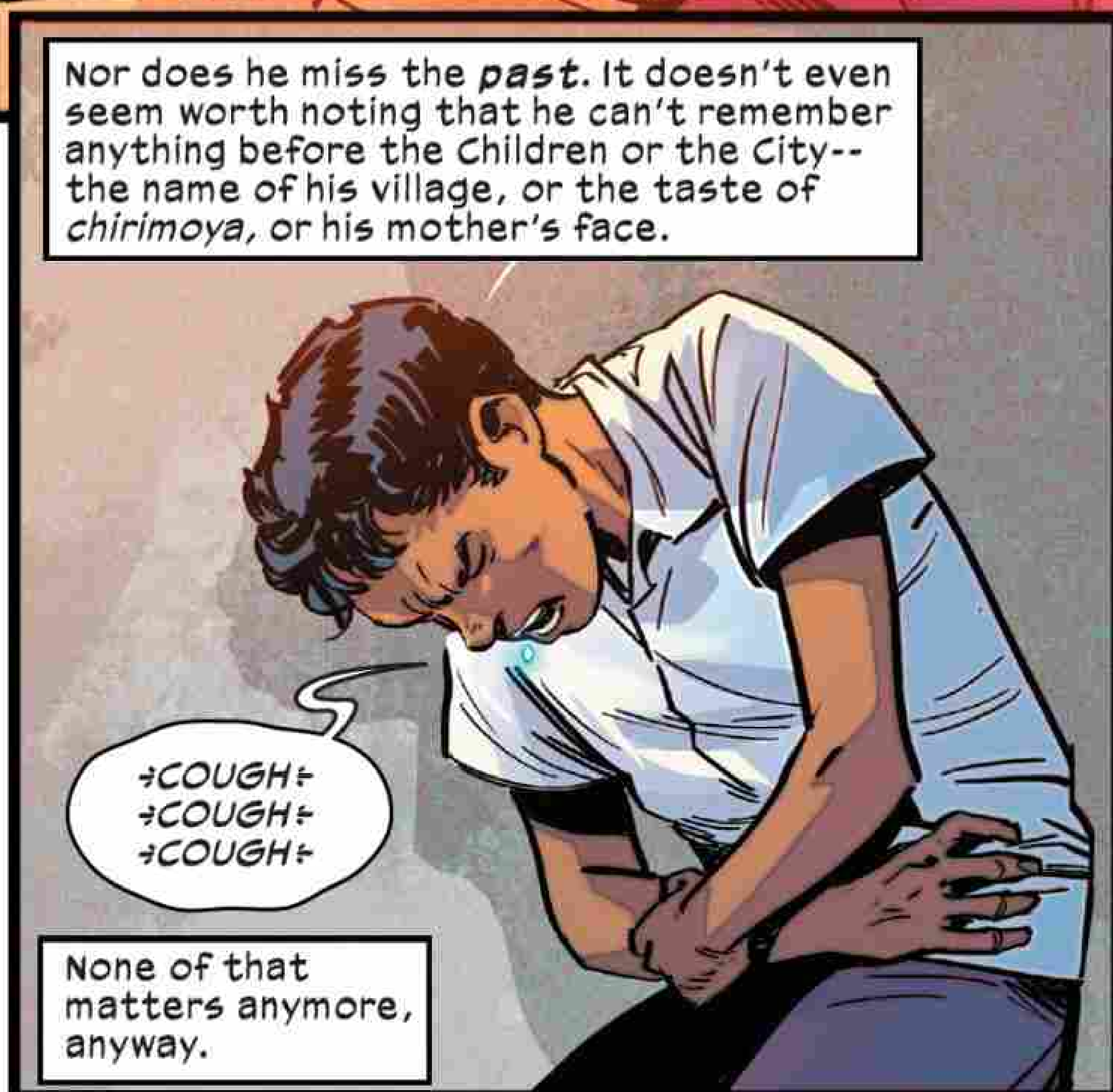
The future's been good to Rodrigo, but now it's becoming something else. *He's* becoming something else.



REMAIN CALM. WE
ARE HERE FOR YOUR
PROTECTION.

Rodrigo stopped feeling fear a week ago. Became incapable of the emotion. Then, a few days later, he realized he no longer felt joy, or anger, or *anything else*.

To his muted surprise, he doesn't miss them.



Nor does he miss the *past*. It doesn't even seem worth noting that he can't remember anything before the Children or the City-- the name of his village, or the taste of *chirimoya*, or his mother's face.

→COUGH→
→COUGH→
→COUGH→

None of that matters anymore, anyway.



B-b-b-b...

Instead of feelings, he has the Message. Instead of a past, he has the future. He has so much of both, it feels like it's all going to pour right out of him.



...become...!

Rodrigo Muñoz thinks about the future. In fact, the future is all Rodrigo can think about.

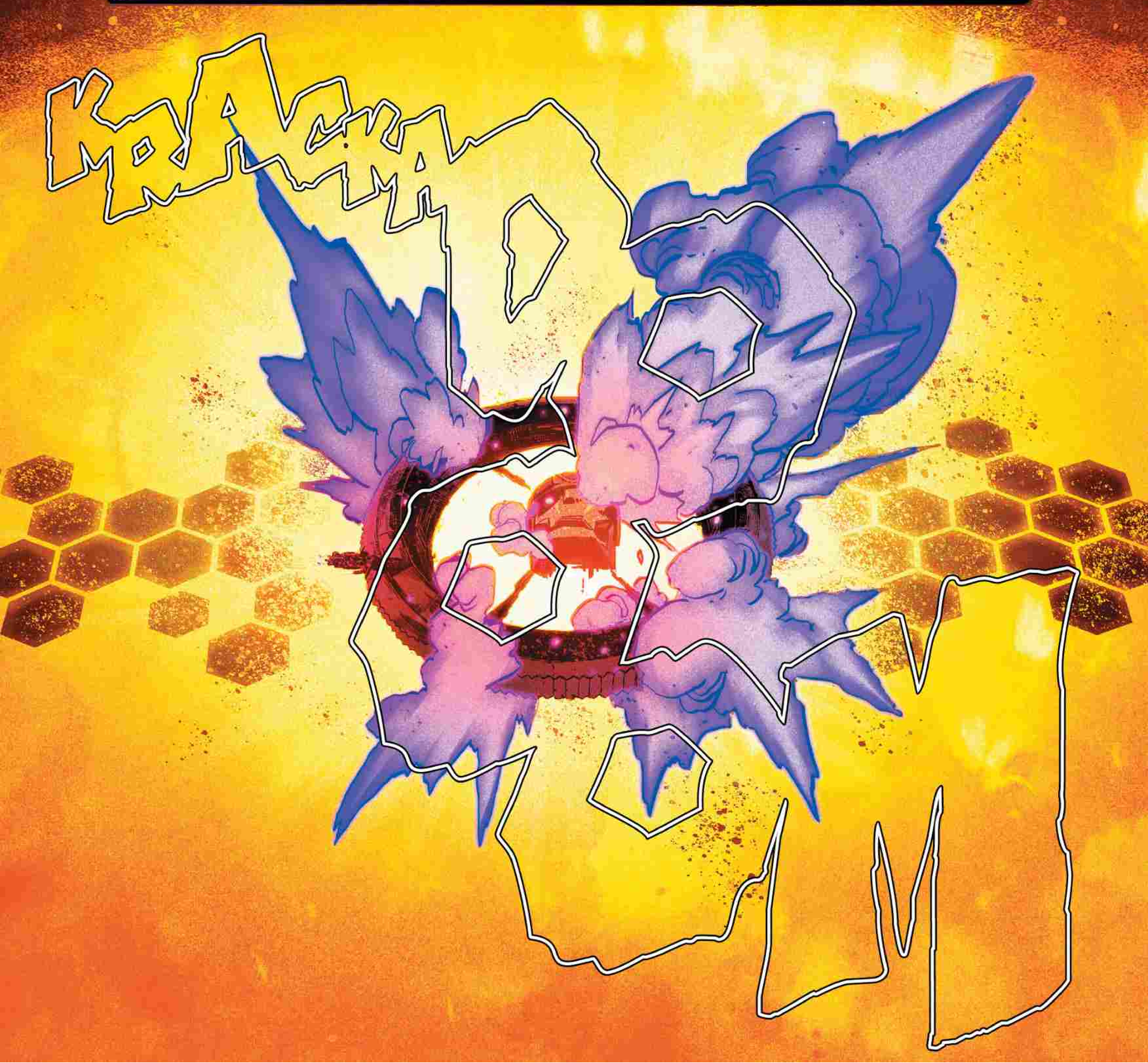
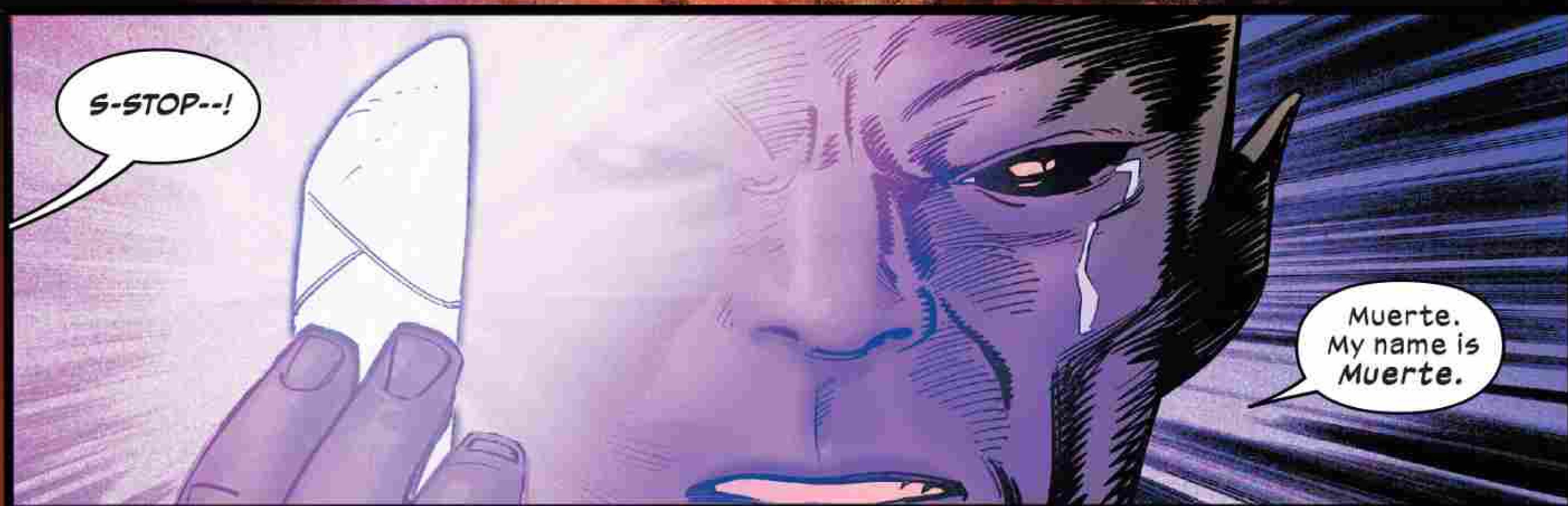
The Reforge.

Squatting on the surface of the sun, the reconstructed Orchis *Mother Mold* births *one thousand* Sentinel sons an hour.

They are the *main body* of the Orchis attack force, inexhaustible cavalry, artillery, and infantry in one.

From the Reforge, these repurposed *mutant-murder machines* are sent directly to the City and Tomorrow Towns all over the planet.





The City.

Put down your weapon, Cable. Can't we be *civilized* about this?

Last time I saw you, you threw a *battleship* at me and seriously @#*@# up the head of a good man for *fun*.



Dead. And before that, *happily married*. But you already *knew* that.

*She means Cannonball, whose heart she once broke in X-MEN (1991) #193. --S.B.

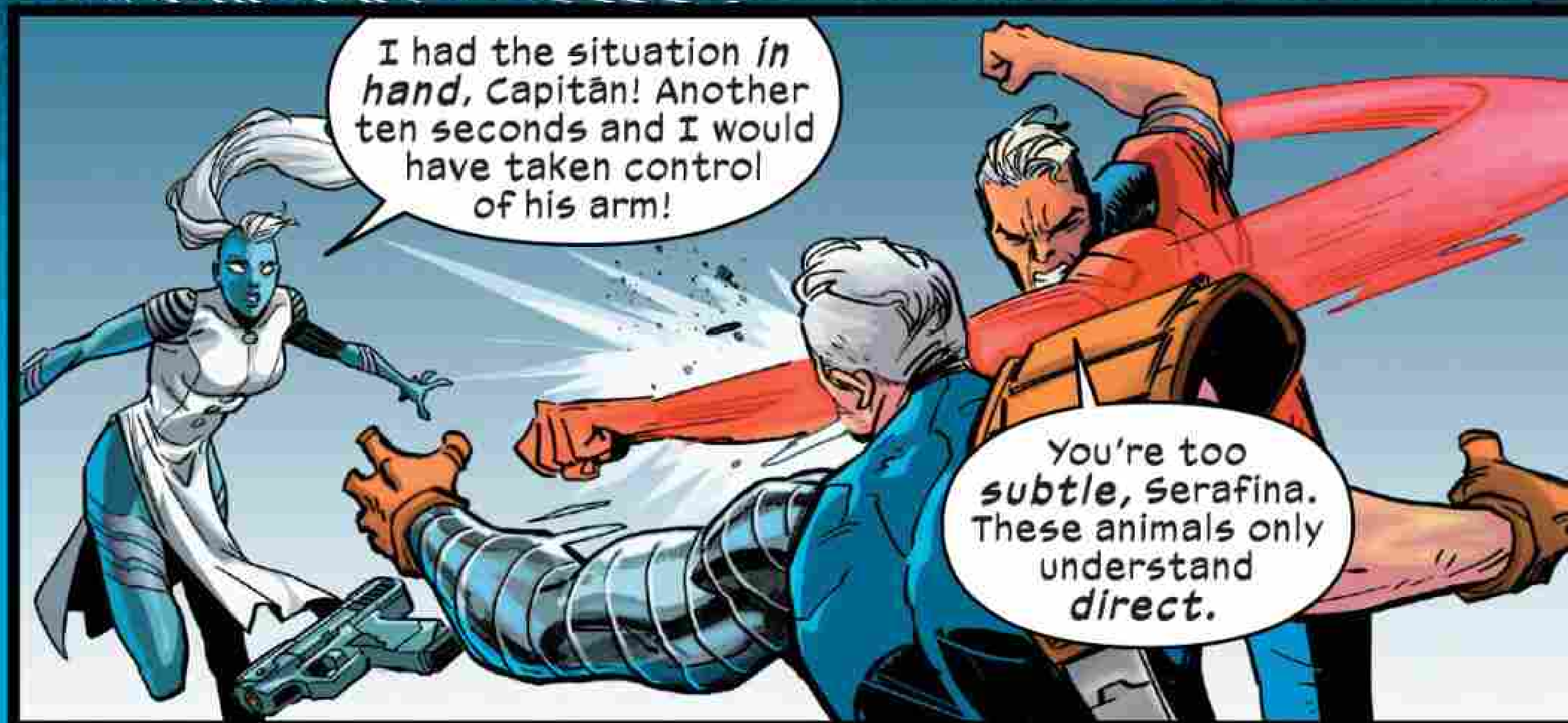
This super-hero look really isn't *working* for you, Serafina. I liked the old you *better*.

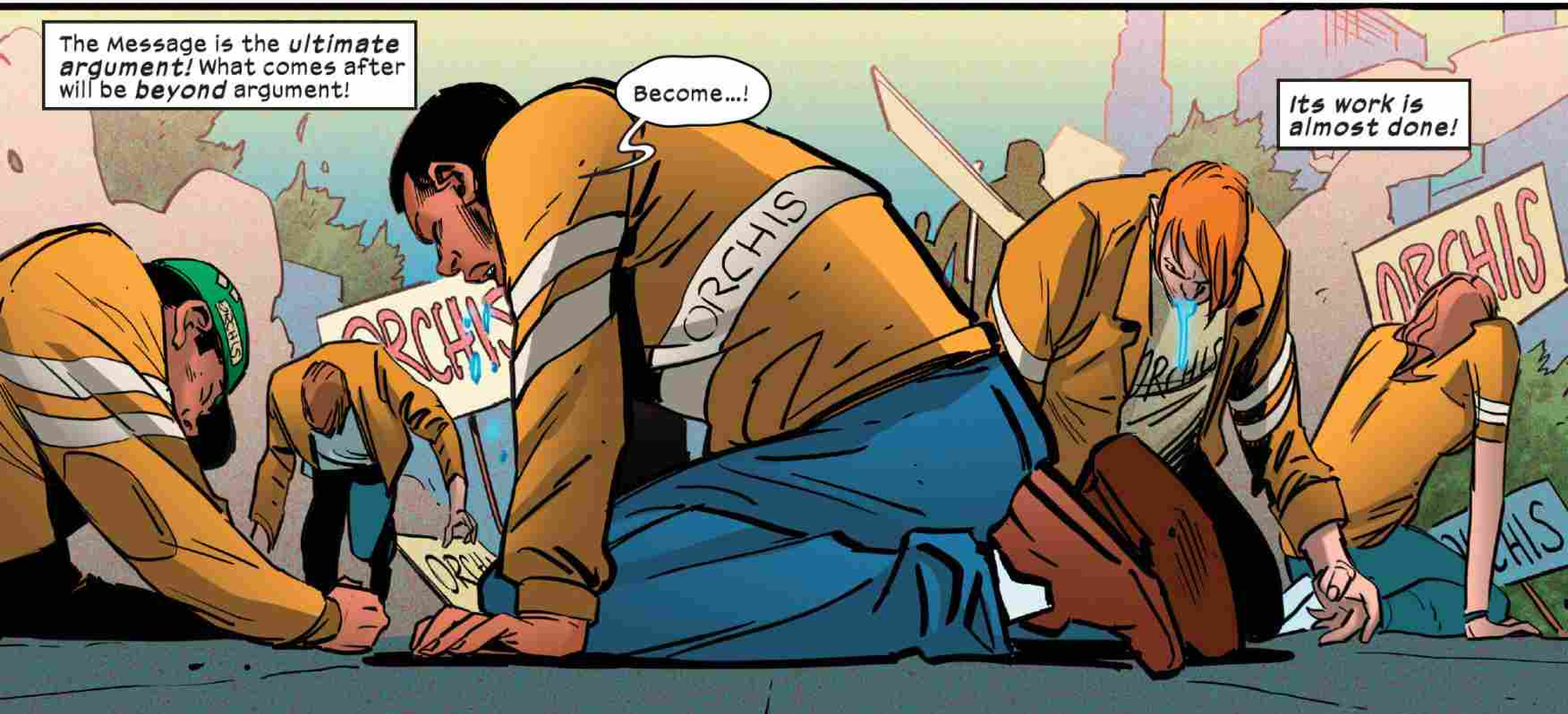
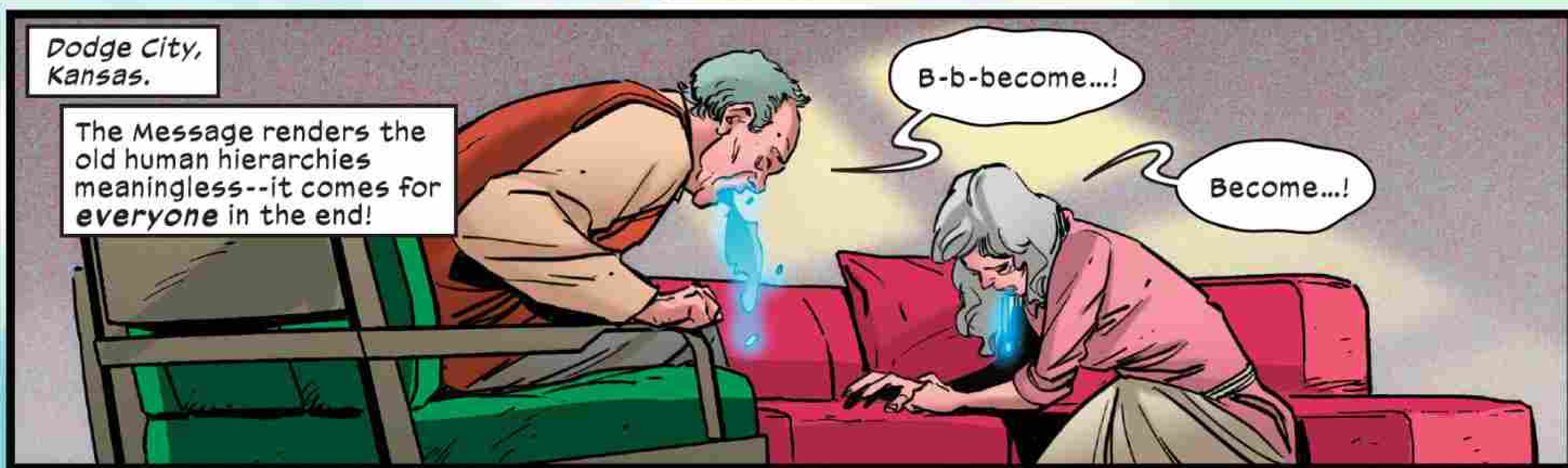
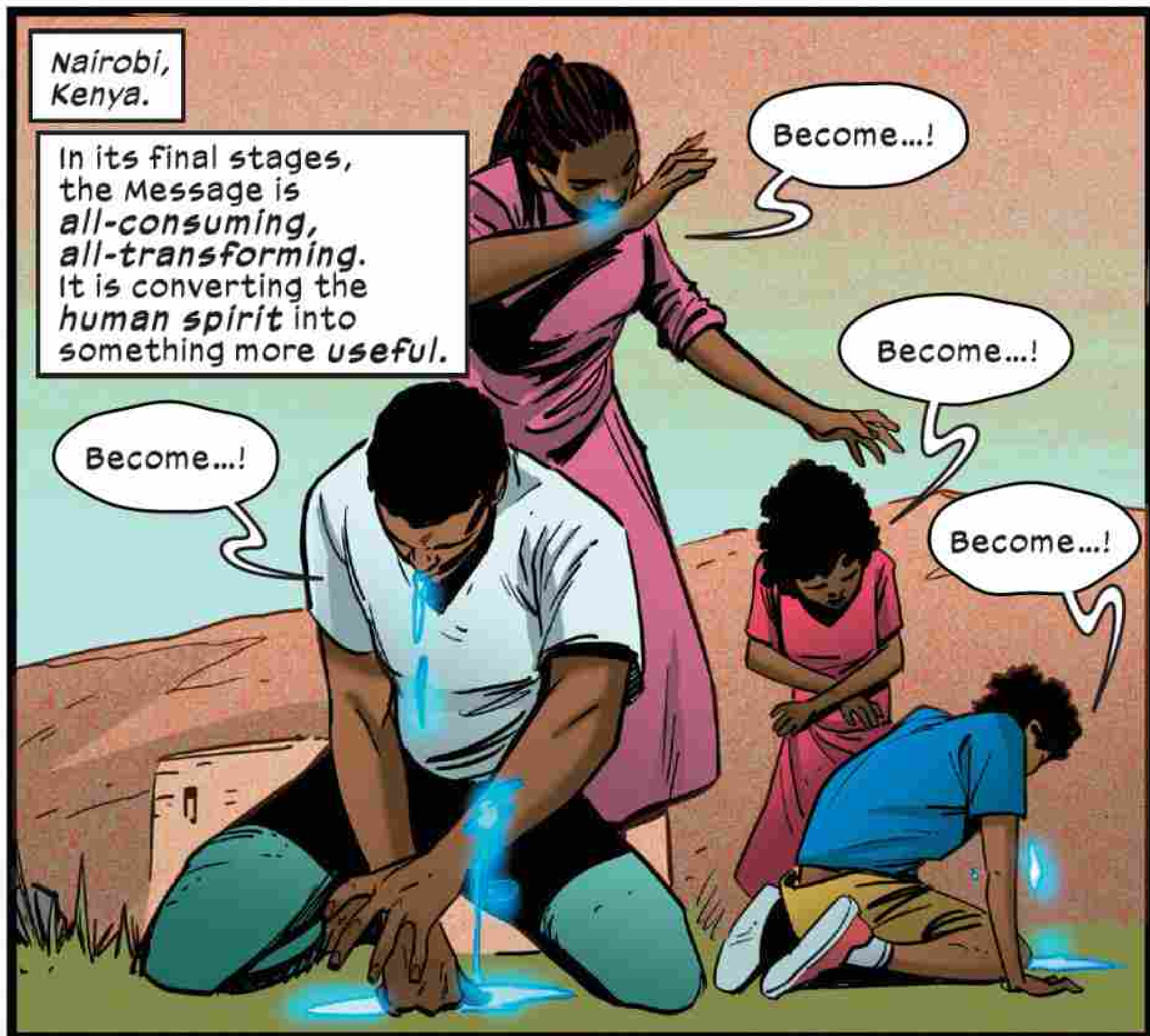
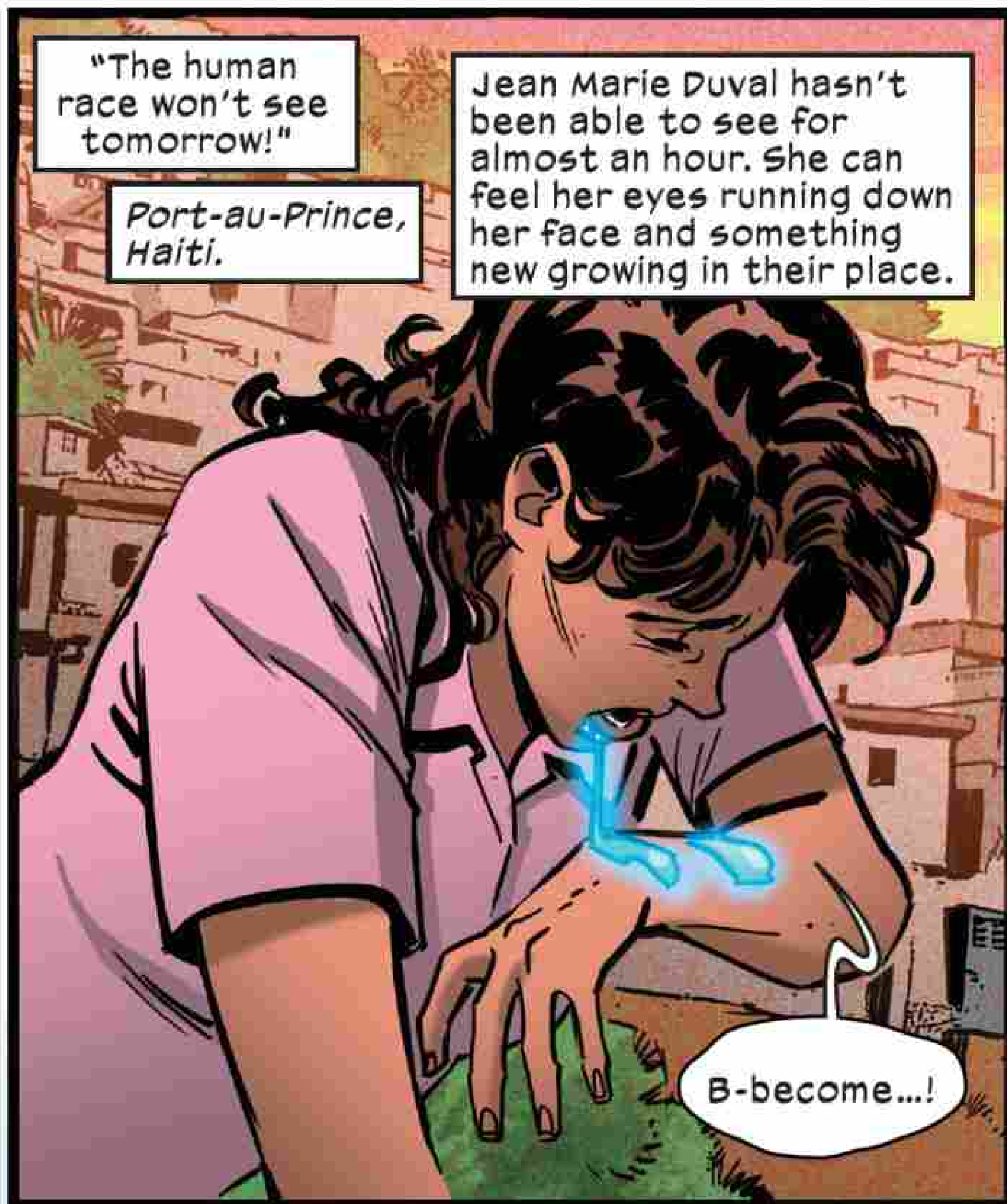
I could say the same. You're supposed to be a *mutant freedom fighter*. And now you work with the *sapiens supremacists*? I'm disappointed.

Something you'll learn about me--I work with whoever I have to. *The devil himself*.

But *why*?! They murdered your entire race! They're *genocidal savages*!

Well, that's why I wanted to introduce you. You've got so much in common.





It will all be over soon,
thinks Luz. *Finally.*



Shifting to coherent light, the world slows to
a brilliant crawl. In this form, she cannot imagine
the darkness--everywhere she looks there's *light*.



She allows the humans'
sluggish projectiles to
pass harmlessly
through her...

...and *dives* deep into the dark pools of their eyes, burning
up the optic nerves and turning all twelve of their brains to
ash before they can process the *sight* of her.

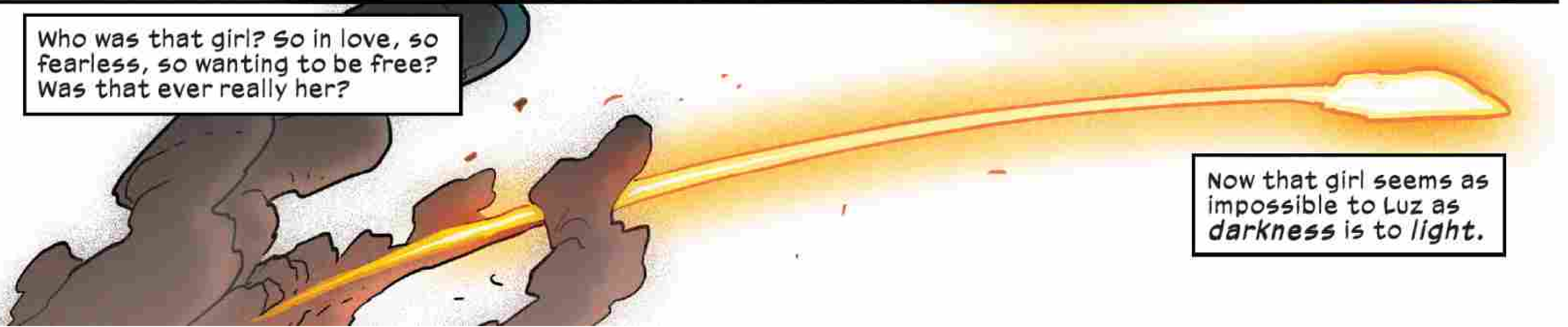


Once, generations
ago, she would have
sympathized with
them, fighting for
their lives. She
might have even
helped them.



Who was that girl? So in love, so
fearless, so wanting to be free?
Was that ever really her?

Now that girl seems as
impossible to Luz as
darkness is to *light*.



This is history. It cannot be questioned.

Before everything, there was the Promise: **The Children Are the Future.**

Our first world was called CONQUISTADOR. Is this **coincidence** or **design**? The future grew in the belly of a ULCC-Type Supertanker, built to ferry valuables in that **primeval pre-world** -- seashells, or oils, or something otherwise absurd.

Those early days were **chaos**. The future's founders -- *our fathers were nature and our mother was time* -- did not see fit to come with us. The Children were **abandoned** to fend for themselves. With no one to ask: **Why?** Why not **join** us in the future?

Perhaps they wanted us to find our **own** solutions. They left us mostly **Problems** and one **Promise**. The Problems we **solved**, and the Promise we **kept**.

We kept the Promise through everything -- through numbered and unnumbered generations, through dislocation, through **disaster** and **defeat**. At the hands of the mutants, we suffered, and through that suffering, the *Promise* kept us. And when differing interpretations of the Promise arose and **civil war** erupted, even **then**, we all fought for the Promise.

Those early days were **chaos**; progress **limited** by internal conflict. Finally, the City was founded, and the Promise was written into its very **core** -- *slipped in as cornerstone* -- so that every **building**, every **window**, every **atom** would reflect it. And whenever the Children pulled away -- *when new and subversive ideas grew like choking weeds* -- the City pulled us **back**, epigenetically **altering** and **updating** the Archetypes to bring each new generation **closer** to perfection. Closer to **fulfillment**. Closer to **the Promise**.

Every Child knows it: **The Children Are the Future**. This is history. It is destiny and purpose and identity.

But if this is history...*true beyond question...*

...if we **are** the future...

...then why do we always **fail**?

– Precipitated and Translated from the Anti-Histories of
Diamante, the Hidden Facets, the Flawed Libraries



Hhhkkkkk!

You've only made it more painful for them. That's *all* you've done.

The Message was our *gift* to humanity. The gift of *elevation*. The gift of *peace*.

Keep your peace, %*#@!



You know, you people talk a lot about *new ideas* and everything, but all I've seen you do is hand out *smallpox blankets* and wrap your *hands* around our necks.

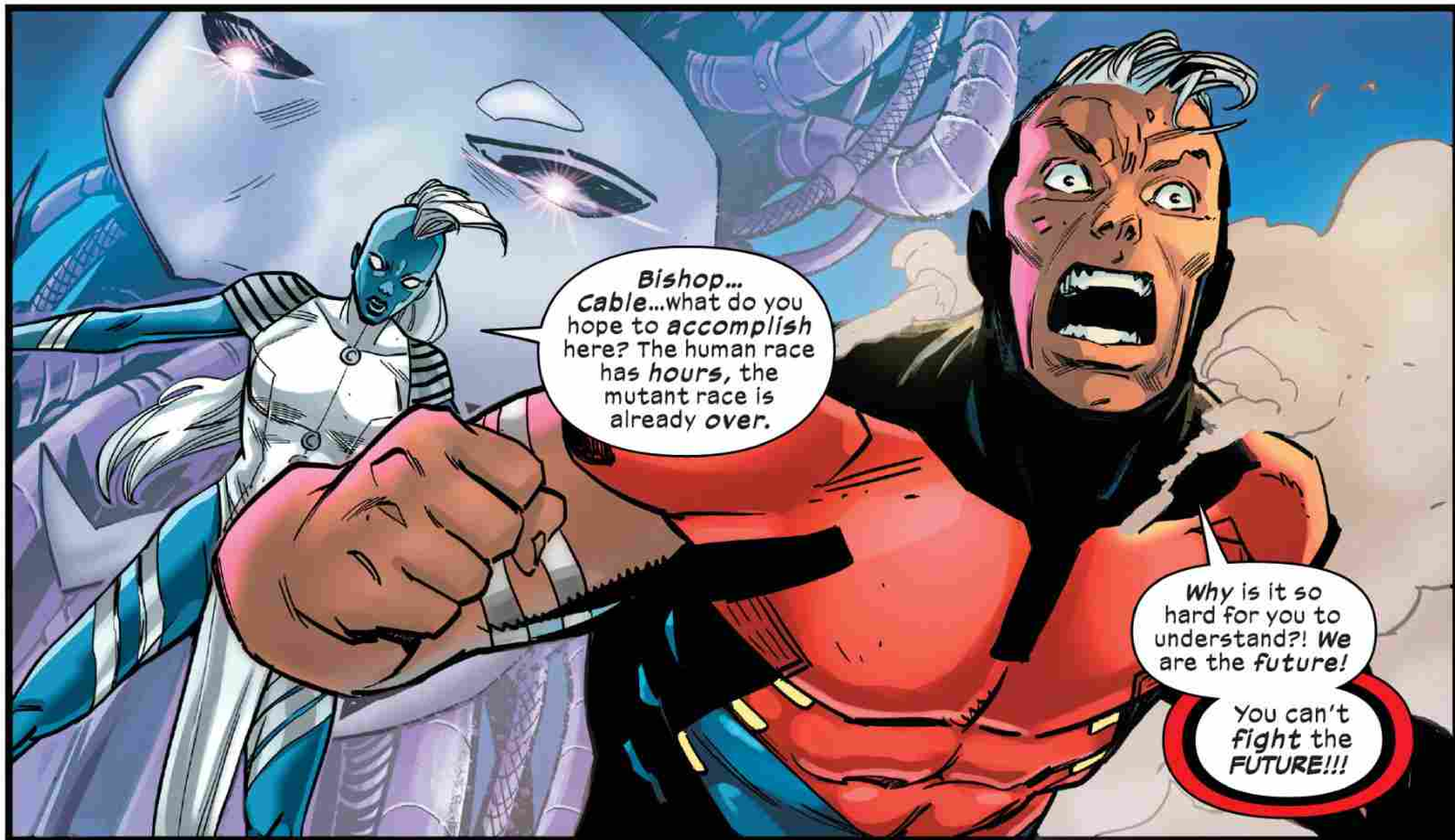
Oldest tricks in the book.



Well, if it isn't *the devil himself*. Took your sweet time.

Didn't think you'd need *saving* so soon.

Are you embarrassed? I'd be *embarrassed*.



Bishop...
Cable...what do you
hope to **accomplish**
here? The human race
has *hours*, the
mutant race is
already over.

Why is it so
hard for you to
understand?! **We**
are the **future!**

You can't
fight the
FUTURE!!!



Actually,
we're known
for it.



You're only
delaying the
inevitable.

More like
stalling for time.
But Nurse Hetty says
it won't be long now...
We're ahead of
schedule too.

Three...
two...one.



ERROR0101
01010101ERO1
010101!!!

Alone among the Children, Diamante, the Living Memory, has no number. Each time he is reborn, he remains essentially unchanged, a *fixed observer* standing outside events.



He is the *ultimate historian*, the future's past *personified*. One hundred thousand years flow through his crystal veins.



So he is shocked to find, for the first time, something *new* in the perfect lattice of his body.

A *flaw*.



As he examines the flaw, it grows. It *grows* and *grows*. It consumes *centuries* in *seconds*.

He is Diamante, the *ultimate historian*. Even as he is devoured by his flaws, his crystal brain consumed by *horror*, he carefully records *every detail* of the experience.



This is history. It cannot be trusted.

I am Diamante, the Living Memory. In me, all of history exists as one, unstained **object** -- a **flawless crystal structure** in which every moment of our race's existence endlessly repeats in a process of **infinite internal reflections**. I have seen all that we have been and done a million times and more. From my privileged vantage -- *at once in and out of time* -- I have witnessed the emergence of a disturbing pattern, like **crystals** from solution: a pattern of **failure**.

Serafina and her "Lost Generation" were only the latest. Each time the Children venture outside the Vault to claim what is ours, the mutants turn us back, broken. In the aftermath, **questions** arise: **Why? How? Chaos** ensues, **cohesion** erodes, and **progress** is threatened. And so a new generation is constituted, and the questions are soon **forgotten**. *The pattern repeats.*

Some things **cannot** be questioned. For the good of society. But even so, the questions **remain**. Our society is **perfect**; our power is peerless. We are forever growing, forever overcoming, forever **evolving**. And yet we **always** fail. **Why?**

In the City, we are not encouraged to imagine, even before the mutants trapped us in imagination. But **imagine** -- a society, a great gleaming City on a hill, built by a **glorious** people. Now imagine that **beneath** this hill, at its very **bottom**, there is a tremendous **fault**. A fatal flaw in the foundation of everything they have established. Wouldn't everything they build be **crooked**? And **dangerous**? And **doomed to fall**?

If a society -- *even a very advanced one* -- has been founded on inherently flawed premises -- *flawed Promises* -- then how can that society be anything but flawed? All of its conclusions would be wrong, all in exactly the same way. They would all **agree** with one another and therefore appear correct. *Universally true.*

And if, at the very bottom of this society, there was a crack, a **central flaw** like the black hole at the center of galaxies -- what hope could they have but to start again somewhere else, on more solid ground? Start again from **first principles**? Or else be doomed to eternal failure?

Some things cannot be questioned. *For the good of society*. But the questions **remain**. And there will come a time when they **must** be asked -- and answered. So I have hidden this fragment of history where only one who is ready will think to look: **inside of a flaw**.

I am Diamante, the Living Memory of the Children. This is **history**, beyond question:

Poor, desperate Sangre, struggling to be heard on the steps of the Foro. His last words to the assembled Children, just before he tore himself apart for the **final** time:

"Behold -- ! The ethics of the elevated:

Genocide with a smile."

— Precipitated and Translated from the Anti-Histories of Diamante, the Hidden Facets, the Flawed Libraries





I've been keeping the sample in a **secret weapons** cache under the mansion ever since. **Bishop** here picked it up a week ago.

It was good to stretch my legs.



You said it yourself. Every molecule of this place is **alive**. The City is one big **brain**. Which means every inch of it is a potential **exposure** site.



0101CATA
*crkk*1C
SY1011TEM



On my way here, I spread it all **over the** place.



This isn't a gun. It's a **syringe**.



Oldest trick in the book.



"You've...
infected
the City?"

Think of
it like a *gift*. A
gift of *peace*.

It's already
corrupted your core
A.I. and converted **ten
percent** of your city to
Techno-Organic matter. At
this rate, the entire City
and everyone in it will be
irreversibly converted
in **24 hours**.

Things
really *do*
move faster in
the City.



And these
are just the *early*
symptoms. A walk in
the park compared
to what comes
next.

Once the
virus converts
enough matter into
Techno-Organic material
it'll form a *Babel Spire*
and send a signal to a
Technarch...a *cannibal*
world that feeds on
solar systems.



ERR0101101R

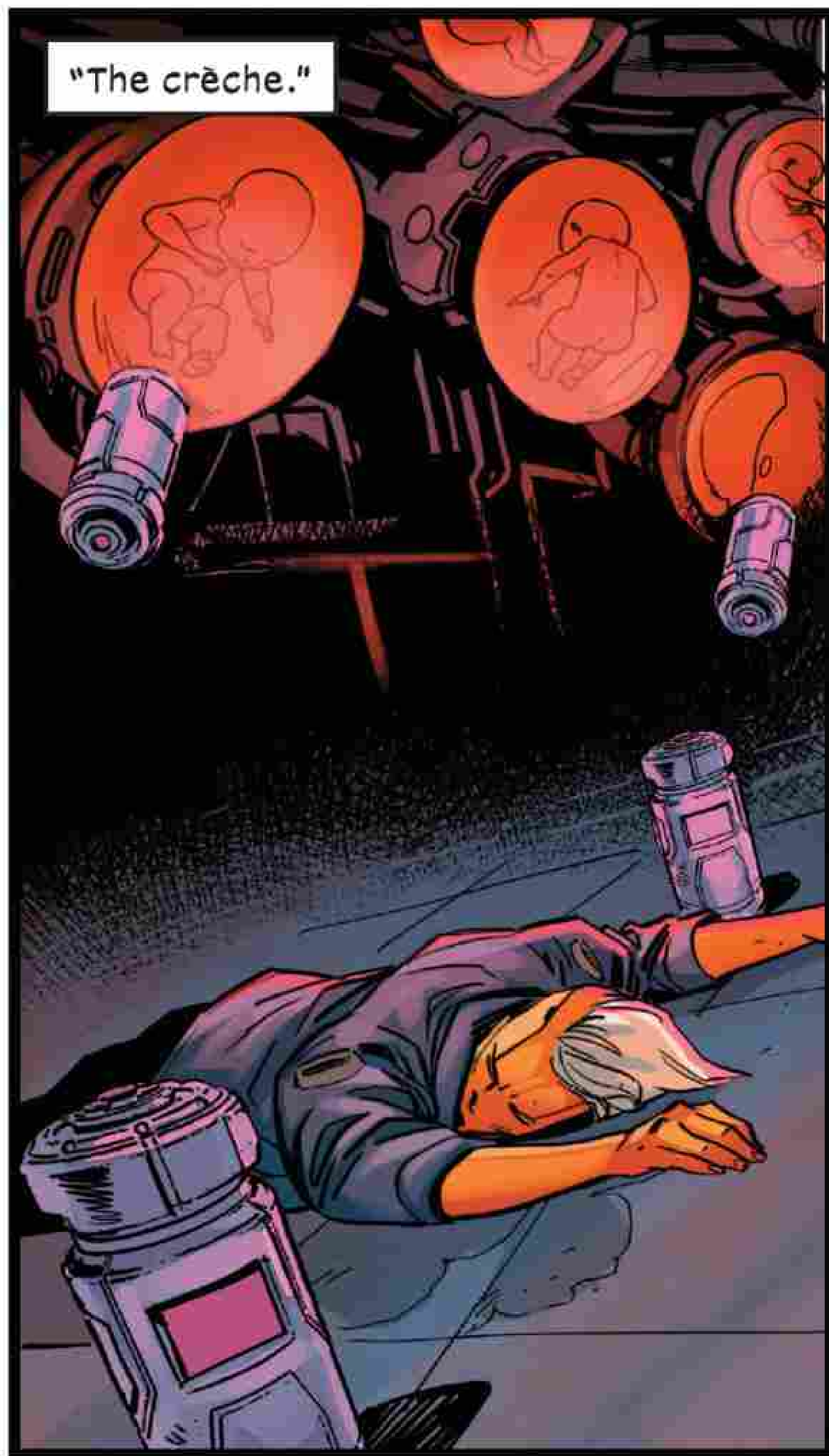
Let's
see how your
predator city
does against a
predator
planet.



You're the
future? Well...
*welcome to
the past*.

We're
all awful
@@##@#
here.







I'll kill--

Stop!

...What do you propose?

Leave. Take your *Message* and your *City* and return to the *Vault*. Never come back here.



They're **BLUFFING!** They won't kill the world just to defeat us!

No? You said it yourself. Our people are dead. And the *humans* are responsible.

The way I see it, you all get what you *deserve*. And *we* start over in another timeline.



I... Capitān is *correct*. The X-Men do not do this. This is not who you are.

X-Men?

The X-Men were pushed into a *meat grinder*. There are no X-Men anymore. Just two old *soldiers*...

...with not much to lose.

You talk to machines and see through time, don't you? So take a good long look at us. All we've done and *tried* to do.



Maybe you're right. Maybe we are bluffing. But can you really risk it?

Given our history?



Better hurry.
The virus is almost
to the crèche. Once it
gets a foothold in your
babies, you'll *never*
get it out.

Trust
me on
that.



You're
beaten. You
know you're
beaten. Do the
smart thing.

Madre
didn't make
it, but you can
still save the
Children.

...



You call *us* cruel. But with *us*, humans
had a *chance*. What did you ever
offer them but *projection*
after projection of their
impending *demise*?

Serafina--!

No! I
have looked
into their past.
And I say--

--we
cannot risk
the future.

Poor defeated Serafina, Voice of the City. When she speaks, she speaks for all the Children of Tomorrow.

But it's *Cable* who provides the words--a carefully chosen **CARRIER PHRASE** for the meaning-annihilating **ANTI-IMPERATIVE**.

WHAT IS, IS.

The Message *self-destructs*. All-consuming truth is reduced to *empty catchphrase*.

What...?

Once potent symbols are torn down and forgotten.

Tomorrow never comes.

<Watch out! It's all... it's all coming apart!>*

*Translated from Spanish.

And something else rushes in to take its place.

ORCHIS

Both sides lay
down their arms,
collect their dead...

...and say
their piece.

Capitân was
right. I see I
was too gentle, too
magnanimous in
this incarnation. I
suspect I won't be...
in the future.

We could
have saved them,
you know. Something
unthinkable is
coming. I've
seen it.

We could
have *saved*
them.

We'll take our
chances.

Then the Children
fold up their City
like an old *map*...

...and return to the
frenzied, fast-forward
chaos of the Vault.

It doesn't take long.
Everything is faster
in the City--the rise
and the *fall*.

For some,
it's over.

BREAKING NEWS

ORCHIS APPROVAL REBOUNDS FOLLOWING DEFEAT OF CITY

For
others...

The rapid
breakdown of
so-called *Tomorrow
Towns* continues to
confuse scientists and
stretch international-
aid services to
their limit.

Only weeks
ago, it was
discovered that
the unstable elements
used to construct the
Futuristic Metropolises
are rapidly degrading
into *potent
toxins...*

...leaving
millions displaced,
and millions *more*
trapped in collapsing,
poisonous cities.

...it never
will be.

The end.

LUCA
MAR
ESCA

FOLLOW THE FALL INTO X-MEN #29:

29

JEAN GREY #4

ALPHA FLIGHT #4

ASTONISHING ICEMAN #4

DARK X-MEN #4

UNCANNY AVENGERS #4

IMMORTAL X-MEN #17

INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #12

UNCANNY SPIDER-MAN #4

WOLVERINE #39

REALM OF X #4

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[children__04]
[04_____vault]
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[fall__of]
[_____X]
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KAMIC RIDER
MARIKA